

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended) A polysaccharide-containing composition comprising (i) a polysaccharide selected from the group consisting of agar, agarose, agarpectin, galactan, carageenan, tamarind gum, tara gum and gellan gum and (ii) water as essential components, characterized in that wherein an amount of precipitated polysaccharide in a concentration of from 0.0001 to 0.01% after performing centrifugal separation at 25°C with 40,000 xg for one hour is less than 65 wt% of a total polysaccharide content.

Claim 2. (original) The polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of precipitated polysaccharide is less than 55 wt%.

Claim 3. (original) The polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of precipitated polysaccharide is less than 30 wt%.

Claim 4. (canceled)

Claim 5. (original) The polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the polysaccharide has a concentration of from 0.0002 to 0.5 wt%.

Claim 6. (currently amended) The polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in ~~any one of claims~~ [[1 to]] claim 5, ~~characterized by which is operable to be uniformly dispersing~~ dispersed on a mucous membrane when topically administered to a mammal.

Claim 7. (original) The polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in claim 6, wherein the mucous membrane is an ocular mucous membrane.

Claim 8. (currently amended) The polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in ~~any one of claims~~ ~~[[1 to]]~~ claim 7, wherein the polysaccharide is agar.

Claim 9. (withdrawn-currently amended) A method for preparing a polysaccharide-containing composition according to claim 1, which is obtainable by heating a composition comprising a polysaccharide and a water-based medium to a gelling temperature of the polysaccharide or higher to dissolve the polysaccharide and then cooling the composition to the gelling temperature or below with applying a shear force, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein an amount of precipitation of the thus-obtained composition after subjecting the composition to centrifugal separation at 25°C with 40,000 xg for one hour is less than 65 wt% of a total polysaccharide content.

Claim 10. (withdrawn) A method for preparing a polysaccharide-containing composition comprising a supernatant liquid obtainable by: heating a composition comprising a polysaccharide and a water-based medium to a gelling temperature

of the polysaccharide or higher to dissolve the polysaccharide; cooling the composition to the gelling temperature or below with applying a shear force; and performing centrifugal separation at 25°C with 40,000 xg for one hour, characterized in that an amount of precipitation of the thus-obtained composition after subjecting the composition to centrifugal separation with 40,000 xg is less than 65 wt% of a total polysaccharide content.

Claim 11. (withdrawn) The method for preparing a polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in claim 9 or 10, wherein the amount of polysaccharide precipitation is less than 55 wt%.

Claim 12. (withdrawn-currently amended) The method for preparing a polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in claim 9 or 10, wherein the amount of polysaccharide precipitation is less than 30 wt%.

Claim 13. (withdrawn) The method for preparing a polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 12, wherein the polysaccharide in the supernatant liquid obtained by the centrifugal separation has a concentration of from 0.0001 to 1 wt%.

Claim 14. (withdrawn) The method for preparing a polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 12, wherein the polysaccharide in the supernatant liquid obtained by the centrifugal separation has a concentration of from 0.0002 to 0.5 wt%.

Claim 15. (withdrawn) A method for preparing a polysaccharide-containing composition comprising heating a composition comprising a polysaccharide and a water-based medium to a gelling temperature of the polysaccharide or higher to dissolve the polysaccharide and cooling the composition to the gelling temperature or below with applying a shear force, characterized in that the thus-obtained composition is diluted to 0.0001 to 1 wt%.

Claim 16. (withdrawn) The method for preparing a polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 15, characterized in that the polysaccharide-containing composition is uniformly dispersed on a mucous tissue when topically administered to a mammal.

Claim 17. (withdrawn) The method for preparing a polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in claim 16, wherein the mucous membrane is an ocular mucous membrane.

Claim 18. (withdrawn) The method for preparing a polysaccharide-containing composition as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 17, wherein the polysaccharide is agar.

Claim 19. (withdrawn-currently amended) A contact lens-wearing solution or a contact lens preservative solution comprising the polysaccharide-containing composition defined in any one of claims 1 ~~[[to]]~~ , 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 or 8 as at least one of the components thereof.

Claim 20. (withdrawn) An agar-containing ophthalmic solution characterized by stabilizing a tear film on an eyeball surface.

Claim 21. (withdrawn) An agar-containing ophthalmic solution to be used for treating or preventing dry eye by stabilizing a tear film of an eyeball surface.

Claim 22. (withdrawn) The agar-containing ophthalmic solution as claimed in claim 20 or 21, comprising an agar composition comprising agar and water as essential components, the agar composition being characterized in that an amount of precipitated agar after performing centrifugal separation at 25°C with 40,000 xg for one hour is less than 65 wt% of a total agar content and being characterized by uniformly dispersing on an ocular surface when administered in the eye.

Claim 23. (withdrawn) The agar-containing ophthalmic solution as claimed in any one of claims 20 to 22, wherein a content of the agar is from 0.0001 to 1 wt%.

Claim 24. (withdrawn) The agar-containing ophthalmic solution as claimed in any one of claims 20 to 22, wherein a content of the agar is from 0.001 to 0.5 wt%.

Claim 25. (withdrawn) The agar-containing ophthalmic solution as claimed in any one of claims 20 to 22, wherein the agar has a weight average molecular weight of from 10,000 to 1,000,000.

Claim 26. (withdrawn) The agar-containing ophthalmic solution as claimed in any one of claims 20 to 22, wherein a viscosity of the ophthalmic solution measured with an E type viscometer (at 25°C and a shear rate of 100 s⁻¹) is 30 mPas or lower.

Claim 27. (withdrawn) A system for stabilizing a tear film on an eyeball surface by administering an ophthalmic solution comprising agar.